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ROBERT WAUCHOPE, General Editor

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PART ONE

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[Title Page]

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9. The Tzeltal

ALFONSO VILLA ROJAS

OCCUPYING A REGION east of the Tzotzil, the Tzeltal live in the central part of the state of Chiapas, Mexico. Three natural zones divide this land: gentle slopes and plains in the south (Amatenango del Valle, Aguacatenango, Pinola, Soyatitan, and Socoltenango); high peaks and irregular terrain in the central part (Chanal, Oxchuc, Tenejapa, Cancuc, Abasolo, and Tenango); lower peaks toward the north.

GEOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHY

Vegetation varies with climate and altitude. In the temperate or cold lands, evergreen oaks and pines predominate; in the lower and warm areas are high evergreen forests, alternating with savannas and subdeciduous forest (F. Miranda, 1952, vol. 1, ch. 3). In the temperate and the warm zones coffee and a great variety of fruit trees—orange, annona, peach—are cultivated.

Few rivers of any volume cross the mountainous terrain. None are navigable. The hydrographic system is delimited by the Usmacinta and Grijalva rivers; the former

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133 flows through the eastern part of the region, the latter through the western, both draining large basins.

161 According to the census of 1950, the pop-
162 ulation of the zone totals 76,617 individuals, distributed over 15,970 sq. km. Of these 49,053 persons are Indian, 27,564 are Ladino. This population is distributed according to Table 1.

[128] San Cristobal de las Casas is omitted from the table because its population is predominantly Ladino (19,758 individuals) and because the Indians who live there (3,296) are of the Tzotzil tongue. Socoltenango and Nicolas Ruiz are also omitted because they no longer have an Indian-speaking population.

161 The central region has the municipalities
631 of the highest density of population: Oxchuc with 129 inhabitants per sq. km., and Tene-
[134] japa with 115. The northern part has an area seven times as large with only twice as much population; the municipality of Ocosingo has hardly one inhabitant per sq. km. in spite of the fact that its lands are the most fertile of the entire region. Although it

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TABLE 1—DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION BY MUNICIPALITIES
(Census of 1950)

Municipalities	Area in sq. km.	Tzeltal-speakers	Spanish-speakers	Total Population
North Zone:				
Sitala	550	5,435	1,385	6,821
Yajalon	145	6,028	4,010	10,036
Chilon	462	9,049	2,070	11,118
Ocosingo	12,143	9,170	3,770	12,940
Subtotal	13,300	29,680	11,235	40,915
Central Zone:				
Chanal	192	2,328	553	2,881
Oxchuc	42	4,074	1,338	5,412
Tenejapa	67	6,215	1,535	7,750
Altamirano	1,559	2,945	1,810	4,655
Subtotal	1,860	15,462	5,236	20,698
South Zone:				
Teopisca	270	754	4,601	5,355
Amatenango	355	1,773	756	2,529
Pinola	185	1,384	5,736	7,120
Subtotal	810	3,911	11,093	15,004
GRAND TOTAL	15,970	49,053	27,564	76,617

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TABLE 2—SPEAKERS OF TZELTAL
(Distribution by Zones)

Zones	Monolingual	Bilingual	Total
North Zone	23,429	8,251	31,680
Central Zone	11,291	4,171	15,462
South Zone	323	3,588	3,911
TOTAL	35,043	16,010	51,053

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Although it
161 has an average of 19 inhabitants per sq. km.,
[241] the southern zone has lands that are suitable
[631] for agriculture and for irrigation, such as in
[128] Amatenango. Later I shall discuss the influence of these factors on the uneven economic and social development of the three zones.

161 The figures on Indians are based exclu-
162 sively on use of the Indian language and
197 so include both monolinguals and bilin-
191 guals: To differentiate each group, however, I have made corrections based on field work as shown in Table 2.

141 The average height of these Indians ranges from 1.55 to 1.60 m. Referring to

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141 the Tzeltal of Tenejapa. F. Starr (1902a) gives measurements of 1.557.1 of height for men and 1.438.4 for women. Local variations exist between municipalities and between zones of different climate and altitude. Blom and LaFarge (1926–27, 2 328–29) describe the Tzeltal of the lower area of Bachajon:

"Physically, the Tzeltal, like all the Mayance Indians, are short, averaging probably about 160 centimeters (5 feet, 4 inches) for the men, 142 and slightly less for the women. Their build is slender, with stringy muscles, except for a good development of the calves. Hands and feet are small and well formed. Their slender-

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Their slender-

147 ness is deceptive, for their great strength lies
[482] in their legs, back, and neck, seen in their ability to carry loads of 45 kilograms (100 lbs.) and upwards, all day up and down hill without
142 undue fatigue . . . Hair form is straight, coarse, and black. Gray hair or baldness are very unusual. Body hair, as far as could be observed, is negative.

143 As many as 99.56 per cent of Tzeltal belong to blood type O, which is one of the highest frequencies registered in the Ma-
143 yance area. According to Matson and Swan-
144 son (1959, p. 50), "In general the more isolated peoples such as the Lacandon, Tzeltal, Tzotzil and Cakchiquel show the highest frequency of the O gene." This condition is attributed to the absence of racial mixture.

Cultural Configuration

621 Like the Indians in the highlands of Gua-
[171] temala (Tax, 1937), the Tzeltal group themselves in communities which are distinct social and cultural units, as is characteristic
621 of the tribe. Each community has its well-
184 defined lands, its own dialect forms, wearing apparel, kinship system, politico-religious organization, economic resources, crafts, and other cultural features. Any native of the region finds it easy to identify the origin of other Indians by noting their speech, wearing apparel, or the goods they
621 sell. Solidarity between the members of each community is strong and becomes manifest in times of conflict with outside groups or in their way of gathering according to their "nationality" on fiestas or market days when people of other communities attend. On the other hand, no ethnic solidar-
[628] ity whatsoever exists. Each community restricts itself to its own affairs and nothing else; whatever happens to the other Tzeltal communities is something altogether apart.

621 The territorial limits of these communi-
632 ties do not always coincide with those of
[971] the municipalities, as in Guatemala. Various well-defined communities exist (in the terms described above) which belong to

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621 other municipalities (Aguacatenango, Can-
632 cuc, Tenango, San Martin, Sivaca, Guaquitepec, and Bachajon). Petalcingo belongs to the municipality of Tila, where Chol is spoken. The reason for these heterogeneous municipalities is that, within the political constitution of the state, only communities containing a sufficient number of inhabitants may achieve the status of municipality; the rest are considered merely as agencies of the municipality to which they have been assigned.

18 Another cultural variation stems from its
177 ecological location. Communities of the
191 southern zone, which have good lands,
361 roads, mechanized transportation, and therefore greater contacts with the outside world, occupy a more advanced place in the process of acculturation, which is revealed by the scant number of monolingual Indian residents and by their better economic condition. Communities of the central zone, of irregular landscape and high demographic pressure, isolated, and without economic opportunities, are the poorest, most conservative, and most untrusting of the entire region. The northern zone has a high index of Indianness because of the number of those who do not know Spanish, but their economic condition is better than that of the central zone, because there is more opportunity to cultivate coffee and work on the plantations.

Historical Antecedents

175 I shall mention only the periods of greatest
177 social significance in the past four centuries.
648 The dates are approximate.

The period of the conquest, from 1524 to 1545, saw the most violent encounters and occasional skirmishes between Indians and Spaniards. The fortress of Chamula was taken by Captain Luis Marín in 1524, and four years later Ciudad Real (now San Cristobal de las Casas), destined to be the politico-religious center of the region, was founded.

The period of catechization and consoli-

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dation of the Spanish dominance lasted from 1545 (when Fray Bartolomé de las Casas arrived with 17 Dominican friars) until 1600. During this period a vast movement of population took place characterized by changes in location of some towns, reductions, and congregations.

During the entire 17th and early 18th centuries, the *period of slavery and royal land grants*, Indians were subjected to heavy tributes and to forced labor on the plantations and in transporation systems of the encomenderos, as *tememes* or carriers. Great caravans of 300–400 Indians, at the command of 10 or 12 Spaniards, transported goods the 1000 km. from San Cristobal de las Casas to Veracruz. Many died from excessive loads and lack of food (B. Metzger, 1960, p. 19).

175 177 648 797

From about 1720 to about 1850 may be considered the *period of resurgence and autonomy of the Indian community*, when the system of royal land grants was suppressed, the Order of Dominicans was weakened, and Spanish authority became relaxed and even indifferent. Bishop Polanco sent a report in 1781 to the Royal Court of Justice of Guatemala, complaining of the abandonment of the Indians (Trens, 1942, p. 200):

> It is wondrous that in the town of Chamula, contiguous to Ciudad Real, Indians have need of interpreter to defend themselves or to beg for what they desire. So that they are as they were twenty years after their conquest, in such a state of blindness and ignorance they find themselves. In the town of San Andres, next to Chamula, there are many saints, old and indecent, whom I thought of burning; I did not do it because those evil souls say that they make them see clearly and alleviate their needs. I suspected a riot without having assistance.
>
> Oh my Lord, their audacity and shamelessness are such that they even come to command in the church, without respect for the priest. They hold to the idea that the third person of the Holy Trinity is the Sun, because, they say, it was thus taught to them by the old fathers.

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175 177 648 797 The mistakes, lack of attention and pretensions of the Indians in regard to the Christian doctrine, who they say they know, and the ones instructed best in them, say as many heretic words as Christian, is consequence or necessary sequel of the lack of care in the secular and ecclesiastical government.

This situation became more and more acute owing largely to the political unrest which absorbed the attention of the authorities, unrest which culminated in the separation of Chiapas from Guatemala and in 1824 its incorporation with Mexico.

175 177 648 The next period, *invasion of lands by Ladinos*, extends from about 1850 to 1911, when the first sparks of the Mexican Revolution reached Chiapas. In this period Ladinos began to invade lands of the Indian communities by bribery or by force. Toward 1856 the Indians complained against the invasion of lands in San Martin, San Miguel Mitontic, San Pedro Chenalo, Cuncuc, and Tenejapa, but failed to halt Ladino inroads (Trens, 1942, pp. 274–75).

The history of recent times, from 1920 on, is marked by increasing support from federal authorities throughout the entire [178] republic. In the Tzeltal area progress has been slow but constantly improving (see LaFarge, 1940; Beals, 1951).

Ethnographic Studies of the Region

114 [101] In his first trip through the Mayance area in 1839 and 1840, Stephens (1841) visited the northern zone of the Tzeltal, from Ocosingo to Yajalon, going through Bachajon and Chilon.

Traveling the same route two decades later in the opposite direction, the French explorer Désiré Charnay recorded his impressions in a small book (1863).

In 1901 Frederick Starr (1902), from the University of Chicago, made a short visit to the region.

In 1925 Blom and LaFarge traversed from north to south a large part of Tzeltal territory, publishing their data in three chapters of their *Tribes and Temples* (1926–

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114 27) but without touching on social organization.

[101] [122] Study of social organization began in 1938 when I made my first trip through the region under the auspices of the Carnegie Institution of Washington (Redfield and Villa Rojas, 1939, pp. 107–19). In 1942–44 we spent several periods among the Tzeltal of Oxchuc, establishing camp at Yochib, and published the results soon thereafter (Villa Rojas, 1946, 1947).

Since 1957 various investigations by the universities of Chicago, Harvard, and Stanford have been headed by the anthropologists Sol Tax, Norman A. McQuown, Evon Z. Vogt, Julian Pitt-Rivers, and A. Kimball Romney.

221 241 ## Subsistence Patterns and Food Habits

The Milpa

Nothing is of greater importance to the Indian than to have a good *milpa*. Three classes of milpas are cultivated: *sijomal*, planted in mid-January and harvested three months later; *nal-aual* or "March milpa" planted in mid-March and harvested toward the end of August; the main milpa, *jabil-caltic* or "milpa of the year," sown between April and May and harvested between November and December. The first two types are most often cultivated in the lower zone of Tierra Caliente, where humidity is favorable.

241 804 Among the Tzeltal of Oxchuc (Villa Rojas, 1946, pp. 510–39), milpa work begins in February with the measuring of the plot. The measuring rod (*jaubtic*), which presumably corresponds to a *brazada* (the distance between the arms extended), is equivalent to 1.98 m. The area 8 brazadas square takes the name of *tarea* (about 256 sq. m.). The area of the milpa is also computed according to the number of ears of corn needed for seeding: 60 ears of corn are required to fill 1.5 hectares, the average in milpas that we observed.

241 412 Since the bush is short, only a hatchet (*eche*) is necessary to cut it down. The

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241 machete (*machit*) or the *luk*, a sort of
[412] curved machete with a long handle, are the implements needed. The cutting of the grass from the plot where the milpa had been the previous year is *selab*, the cutting of bush grown for three or four years is *sok-uej*. The work of cutting the bush is done by the entire family, including children of seven or eight years old.

[221] The planting is done between April and
[412] May after the first rains, with a long stick whose tip is hardened by fire or pro-
[242] tected by a metal point. The seed must come from large, healthy ears whose tips have been cut off because they have small corn. The *olote*, or corncob, is either kept
[824] or thrown away at a distance to avoid its being used as fuel, for this would hurt the milpa which then would produce ears with broken kernels.

241 The task of planting is a very delicate
462 matter, to be performed after fasting and
785 sexual abstinence. It is exclusively a man's
834 affair. A great banquet is served at noon,
241 generally outdoors as the hut interiors are
574 small, to the friends and neighbors who will participate as helpers. Sometimes as
[476] many as 10 men help to plant a friend's milpa. The meal is offered "precisely when the sun stops for a moment midway on its run and the doors of the Church of Heaven are opened, from where the quality of the banquet is observed." This is *s-uelil-abal* ('meal of the planting').

241 When things are properly done, the meal
262 consists of a number of items. First the
272 *atole* (*pajal-ul*) is served, which is slightly
574 sour and sweetened with *panela*. As "com-
[263] panion" to this atole are tamales (*chenkul-uaj*), which are prepared with cornmeal and ground beans. It is said that both things are to be served together so that "the seed may penetrate deep into the ground."
241 After this preliminary snack comes what is
252 considered the main course for each per-
262 son: a hard-boiled egg in a thick reddish
574 broth prepared from dough and ground
272 chile dissolved in water, a large tortilla,

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Tenejapa

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FIG. 1.—PARAJE REPRESENTATIVES VISITING THE CEREMONIAL CENTER OF TENEJAPA.
(Copyright Gertrude Duby)

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boiled beans; other tamales (*petul*), which are made from dough and whole beans; and finally, still more atole. The atole is served not in individual *jicaras* but in two or three large ones (*batzil-booch*), which are passed from person to person. The same is done with the other foods; they are served in one or two large pots (*mucul pulato*) out of which everyone serves himself. This banquet is given only on the first day of the planting, if other days are required, the milpero himself does the planting.

Since weeds grow rapidly during the rain season, the milpa must be hoed twice before it reaches maturity. For this the luk or coa is used and also the hoe (*asron*), the same one used to break the soil before planting. The first weeding is done in June, the second between July and August. Women help their husbands in this chore and sometimes do it entirely themselves, since the men are in the habit of leaving for Tapachula to work as peons on the coffee plantations.

Also in the milpa beans of several varieties are planted: *chuil-chenek* (or *ibes*, according to the Ladinos); *botil*, a large common bean; *xakil-chenek* or *frijol de vara*; and the *x-luumil-chenek* or *frijol de la tierra*, thus called because it is a creeping plant.

Chile is planted on a separate lot, 15–20 m. square. The planting is done during the first weeks of March, in alternate years so that it will not coincide with the year when the people of Cancuc plant cotton. Chile planted by the people of Oxchuc is *dzajal-ik* or red chile.

Toward the end of August, the first fruits are ready (*unimajam* or *jilote*, according to Ladinos). These are received with great joy by the families which are by then lacking food. From each plant, which provides two or three *jilotes*, the farthest down is picked to let the other two grow bigger. These jilotes are boiled without salt and are eaten whole, including the husks.

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241 Between September and October, when the tender ears are ready, some are torn loose to prepare atoles and tamales.

Toward the middle of October, when the milpa has reached maturity, all hands proceed to the task of the *dobla*, folding or breaking the stem of the plant so that the ear dries and may later be put into the [462] barn. This is an easy task, in which men, [857] women, and children take part.

The harvest takes place in November and [592] December with the participation of the whole family; it is a joyful task which compensates for all the moments of anxiety in the previous months, when subsistence was [251] scarce. The produce from the milpa is gathered in large nets and later stored in a corner of the house or in some improvised [804] structure nearby. The crop is measured by *zontles*, units of 400 ears, which are formed by counting the ears by fives; two ears are taken in one hand and three in the other until 400 are reached. The family of five [261] members which manages to harvest from [231] 15 to 20 zontles considers itself happy, since that much will last them the entire year, consuming 20 ears a day plus feeding one or two hogs and 10 or 12 chickens.

The milpa also produces various squashes, manioc (*dzinté*), and peanuts, which the Indians call *caxlan-chenek* ('Ladino's bean').

243 Exceptional among the Tzeltal is the cul-
184 tivation of wheat in Amatenango. There the small valley and a creek have favored its development.

241 The most important ceremonies take
796 place immediately after planting. They entrust the germination of the seed to the care of God, of the "thirteen holders of Heaven," and of "Tatik Jesucristo." The "thirteen holders of Heaven" refer to the principal saints who are mentioned in the [798] prayers. The ceremonies consist in offer-[782] ings of prayers and incense before the crosses kept in caves belonging to each paraje, and in one *bikit mixa* ('small Mass'), which the cabildos and principales of the

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241 paraje perform before the altar of the
782 church in the ceremonial center. All prayers
796 are said in Tzeltal, some are Christian in
[778] origin, others entirely pagan. This prayer
[177] I recorded in 1944:

241
796 Here we come to bring you your food, to
782 light your candles, to play the harp, to play the
539 guitar. Here we come to perform your fiesta,
[534] so you may be happy, so you will not abandon us.

We have already planted the milpas; the seed is already in the soil. Father, do not forsake us; let the rains come properly; let them not be abundant nor deficient. Let there be a little sunshine and a few clouds. Let the soil be happy.

Father, let no hail come; let no wind come; let no locust come, let no harmful animals come, let no robbers come, lest they steal from us and leave us in poverty.

Father, let the year come well; let the corn turn out well; let the beans turn out well. Let there be no sickness, let there be no sorrow. Father, the mouthful has already entered, the word had already entered.

The word "mouthful" refers to all the gifts, "word" to all the prayer.

796 A similar ceremony is the *mukul mixa*
[621] ('great Mass'), organized by members of
[776] each calpul. Each calpul has its own patron
[622] saint and its own chiefs. For this ceremony
[534] many more people gather, for representatives and musicians (flute, drum, harp, and guitar) come from all places. The candles offered as "mouthfuls" are greater in number and size.

778 Household ceremonies follow as the head
78 of the household, in private, prepares the small home altar, where the cross which
[834] protects the home is always found. He adorns it with *juncia* and five candles; he says appropriate prayers at 6 o'clock in the morning or at midday, as he observes fasting and sexual abstinence. These family prayers may be repeated occasionally, depending on the condition of the milpa.

241 At the beginning of the month called
782 [P. 202-A]

241 782 [825] *chin-uch* (May 20–June 8), an offering is made to the supernatural being which reigns over it. The natives have vague notions of the nature of this being. They say that *uch* is the name of a small insect which spoils the pozole and, also, of the *tlacuache* or *zarigueya* which often destroys the milpa. The offering, hung at the entrance of the hut, consists of a ball of pozole wrapped in plantain leaf, a red chile, a tortilla, an ear of corn, and a little stick like the kind used to turn the ear cooking over hot coals. 241 782 787 All objects are minute in size. When the offering achieves its purpose, on the completion of a 20-day period, the atmosphere becomes hazy "as if there were smoke." It is explained that "the chin-uch burned its house," which forecasts a favorable sun for development of the milpa. If such a sign should not appear on the indicated date or at the end of the next month of *mukul-uch* (June 9–28), the forecast is ominous and indicates that the rains will be excessive, greatly harming the milpa.

778 796 [184] [789] Another mukul-mixa is performed in Oxchuc, in homage to the hill called Ikal-Ajau, near the ceremonial center, of which the Indians say "it is a living hill." The name of the hill is that of the ancient hill worshipped by the Oxchueqeños. Nuñez de la Vega (in Becerra, 1933, p. 293) reports: "Those of Oxchuc and other towns of Los Llanos venerate very much the idol which they call Icalajau, which means principal Negro or lord of the Negroes." This Mass, performed the first days of June, prevents locusts and other plagues from coming.

241 78 Once the crop is in the granary, other family prayers are said before the household cross, to give thanks for the good received and to petition the supernatural beings to protect the grain from insects and rodents.

Other Subsistence Resources

262 235 [231] [437] Other food resources include raising chickens and pigs. A family averages about 10 chickens, using the eggs as money when

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they visit the regional market. Only during illness or fiesta are both chickens and eggs eaten.

In towns like Tenejapa and Cancuc, Indians buy small pigs from the Ladinos of the center, fatten them for 8 or 10 months, then sell them to the Ladinos, who slaughter them and sell the meat to the Indians. As may be supposed, in this sort of symbiosis the greatest profit accrues to the Ladinos. However, the Indians more often keep the money from selling pigs to meet emergencies or expenses of clothing, tools, and fiestas.

Food Habits

Corn, beans, chile, and squash are the core of Indian diet, supplemented by manioc, sweetpotato, potato, and chayote. One or more chayote trees next to the house are common; every part of the chayote is used—fruit, tender leaves, and root—usually boiled with salt. Wild herbs are eaten raw or cooked. Among the raw ones are *culix-uamal*, *xhix-uamal*, and *alauanex*, the last a wild radish which Ladinos call "the Indian's radish." Herbs that are cooked include *tzul* and *tuxac*. Some herbs are eaten both raw & cooked: *verdolaga* or *chic-xecul*, *muem* (*hierba mora*), *maj-tas*, *tzuy*, and *San Sibro Uamal*. The last is a small grass with long thin leaves which the Indians grind and add to give a better taste to the *pilico* or wild tobacco. This is called *poxil-may*, which is like saying "medicinal pilico." Ladinos use its leaves in tea sweetened with panela.

There are three main meals during the course of the day: breakfast (*ue-el sab*), which consists of atole or pozole, beans, chile, and tortillas; lunch (*ue-el olical*) of the same foods plus a vegetable such as squash or chayote; and supper (*ue-el x-malcal*), with atole, tortillas, beans, and chile. In Tenejapa rabbit meat is frequently on the table. In Amatenango, Aguacatenango, and Pinola, greater contact with Ladinos has added coffee, wheat bread, var-

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177 262 ious meats, and canned foods such as salmon, sardines, and sausages.

231 [222] The keeping of bees is not widespread. The Indians instead take advantage of the wild honey, which is commonly gathered during certain parts of the year. Tenango was the only town where I observed beehives next to the huts. The bees, large and yellow, are called *aja-chab* and are brought from the woods. When a tree is found with one of these beehives, the section containing the hive is cut off and is taken to town; the ends of this section are covered with jicaras, which are stuck on with clay.

Settlement Patterns

Town and Parajes

632 621 361 [563] All the communities consist of a town center and a number of settlements, called parajes, which are scattered over the municipio. The town is the political, religious, and commercial center of the entire community; there the municipal authorities have their offices, and the church and shops are located. In general, the Ladinos reside in the center, their houses arranged in aligned streets, but some communities (Chanal, Amatenango, Aguacatenango, Cancuc, Bachajon) refuse to accept Ladinos in the town permanently. The Indians prefer the parajes, where the huts are dispersed irregularly.

162 As observed by Sol Tax for the highlands of Guatemala (1937), the proportion of Indians who reside in the town center varies. In some communities (Chanal, Aguacatenango, Cancuc, Tenango) nearly all the people live in the capital. In Chanal, with a population of 2,881 persons, 2,386 reside in the center and so it is a "nucleated town," according to Tax's terminology. In contrast, the most common community is the "vacant town." Tenejapa, for example, has only 517 inhabitants of a total 7,750 residing in the center. The least frequent is an intermediate type, where some live in the center and some in the parajes, as typified by

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Tenejapa

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FIG. 2—TENEJAPA WOMAN AND CHILD. (Copyright, Gertrude Duby.)

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162 Amatenango del Valle, a community of 2,529 inhabitants, of which 1,470 reside in the town center.

621 The town centers are divided into two sections, called barrios by Ladinos and calpules by Indians (Oxchuc and Cancuc). The imaginary line which separates one barrio from another passes through the center of the town, sometimes east-west, sometimes north-south, with no fixed orientation.

[776] Each barrio has its own local authorities and sometimes its own patron saint (Oxchuc and Bachajon). The principal function of the barrios was not only political or religious but also social, in regulating mar-

[178] riage. Endogamy was common to all barrios, but today that rule is losing its rigidity. In Aguacatenango, B. Metzger (1960, p. 8) tells us that, "The rule of barrio endogamy, which is viable in 86% of the known marriages, contributes to the localization of related families limiting the geographical range of marriage choice." A similar situation obtains in Amatenango (J. Nash, 1959, p. 3), Cancuc (Guiteras Holmes, 1947, p. 7), and Bachajon (Guiteras Holmes, 1961c, p. 167).

[178] In Bachajon, Guiteras Holmes states that: "In the old days there was no marriage be-

[578] tween the *barrios*. If a boy from San Sebastian took a walk through San Geronimo, he was beaten; they would give him a '*maciza*,' as they say. If a boy from a *barrio* approached the waterholes to court a girl, he fared very badly." The calpules of Oxchuc, although they have politico-religious significance, have no influence at all in the selection of wives.

621 The parajes have a few scattered huts
778 among the cultivated fields. Each paraje is
[361] bound by religious ties to a given cave where a cross, the supreme sacred symbol, is kept. The name of the paraje is generally
778 taken from the name of the cave. Sacred
821 caves of secondary importance also exist.
823 This mystical regard for caves is based in the belief that they are the place from which issues the lightning to punish the

[P. 205-A]

778 821 823 natural elements (hail, wind, storms), which often threaten and destroy the cornfields.

Distribution of Huts

621 In the parajes as well as in the centers the tendency to cluster huts in patrilineal nuclei is strong. One perceives this tendency also where lineage or clan ties still persist (Oxchuc).

[594] The majority of households consist of the elementary family, a couple and their 342 offspring. The habitations include a hut, 343 which serves as dormitory and kitchen, plus [417] chickencoop, pigpen, and, sometimes, the temascal (*pus*) used for steam baths. 343 Among industrious families another small hut serves exclusively as a kitchen. Seldom 417 does a fence separate this nucleus from its neighbors, but it may protect a vegetable patch from animals. In the capital, however, each family must fence its lot.

Relationships between Communities

628 Communities establish commercial and other ties according to their ecological distribution and cultural condition. In the southern zone, Amatenango and Aguacatenango form a kind of unit, based on physical proximity and cultural affinity. Their residents meet frequently at the Sunday market of Teopisca. In the central zone, Oxchuc, Tenejapa, Cancuc, and Tenango, which more or less share ways of life and natural environment, form another informal association, contacts resulting from the weekly markets of Tenejaya and Yochib. In the northern zone, Sitala and Guaquitepec form another unit. Ocosingo, Chilon, and Yajalon are centers of commercial and political importance, occupied largely by Ladinos but used as trade centers by Indians throughout the northern zone.

412 TECHNOLOGY

Tools and Techniques

Farming tools are the most important: axe

[CP 205-B]

412 (*eché*), hoe (*asron*), machete (*machit*), coa (*luk*), and digging stick (*avutel*). In a 243 [409] few towns (Amatenango), where lands are flat, the plow is made of wood and pulled by oxen but only for wheat farming. During [415] corn planting, the seed is carried by the [824] planter in a *morral* hung from the shoulder, [237] in a gourd with a large spout, or in containers made of armadillo shells. The harvested crops are placed in deep baskets, made of reed-grass, or in big pita (*chojak*) [412] net bags. The ear of corn is cleared of its [237] husk by a sharp bone or a small deer horn.

322 412 The axe, machete, and knife are used in wood working, which is very rudimentary, though handsaw and hammer have a place. With these tools the Indians make doors, tables, seats, small benches, shelves. Blom [534] and LaFarge (1926–27, 2:351) add that the Tzeltal near Ocosingo also make violins of a shape similar to the European type, but they have no resonance and poor tone. They also manufacture pipes and combs roughly [463] finished. No village of this group has specialists in carpentry to compare with the Chamulas (Tzotzil-speaking), who supply furniture at low cost to San Cristobal de las Casas and other places of the area.

324 412 Stone carving requires a pickaxe with one end very sharp, the other very flat to serve as a hammer, and a short wooden handle. This is the tool used in Tenejapa for making metates. These metates have three legs, but Blom and LaFarge (1926–27, 2:338) mention metates without legs (Ocosingo municipio) which are made of volcanic stone found along the San Martin River. According to the Tzeltal of Oxchuc, the name of the metate is *chá*, its handle *kab-chá*.

412 An iron bar to break the ground, an axe, and a machete are the tools for building huts, chickencoops, sweat houses, and other small structures.

283 413 Another tool, used in the making of pita rope, is *karet*, which probably comes from the Spanish *carreta*. It consists of a wooden disc fixed to a tree trunk that is nailed to

283 413 the ground. This disc has two hooks to which the fiber is knotted; when the disc is turned by a crank, it braids the fibers into rope. A thick board, smoothed by a metal knife (manufactured by the Indians from iron pieces bought in the city), is used to scrape the pita and remove the fiber.

407 [177] The most complex machine that the Tzeltal own and build is the wooden cane press, which was imported by the Spaniards to grind sugarcane (fig. 6). This machine is operated by two men, who move the rollers by a handle (*kaibal-té*) at each end of the [415] machine. The juice pressed out by the rollers drops into fluted containers made of pieces 273 of banana tree, and finally into a pot. This juice is used in the preparation of an alcoholic beverage, *chicha* (*chi-ja*, 'sweet water'), and for panela. Chicha is prepared by [415] fermenting this juice by bran, corn, or wheat, in a special container (*canoja*) made from a fluted tree trunk. The bran or other fermenting agent is *smé-chi-já* ('mother of [184] the chicha'). Some communities (Tenejapa, Cancuc, Oxchuc) have greater preference for this beverage than other Tzeltal groups.

224 411 [412] A gun has become very common in hunting. Sometimes (Oxchuc and Tenejapa) rabbits are taken by striking them with a coa, after cornering them with the aid of dogs. Blom and LaFarge (1926–27, 2:352) state that the Tzeltal of the lowlands usually hunt wild boar with long wooden spears with fire-hardened or metal points. Traps protect the milpa as well as snaring game.

41 Cooking utensils are mainly indigenous. The usual set consists of clay containers of varying size and shape, jícaras, baskets, wooden spoons, a comal, a metate, hooks, and wooden tripods for hanging items over 177 the fire. In the last few years metal pots, 404 dishes, frying pans, boiling pans, and espe- 415 cially handy *nixtamal* mills (which are gradually displacing the grinding stone) 177 have been introduced. Other items that 207 come from the city are flashlights, small 405 kerosene lamps, watches, scissors, and (in- 412 frequently) battery radios. 446

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Handcrafts

323 Among the few handcrafts practiced in [462] the Tzeltal areas, ceramics, produced mainly by women, is the most widespread. Tenango [184] and Amatenango del Valle are the only communities which have made a specialty of this craft. Tenango exports its products [439] through the northern zone. Amatenango through the southern zone, including neighboring Guatemalan villages. Both places use 323 184 a similar ceramic technique but different shape and ornamentation. Referring to Amatenango del Valle, Blom and LaFarge (1926–27, 2:396) state:

> The pottery, which is their chief product, is almost all of one shape; a sphere, with three handles and a narrow bottle-neck with a flat lip. The decoration does not vary. Both shape and design, however, are of considerable charm. The polish is fine and smooth, giving an even golden-red colour all over, with the decoration in a deep, reddish brown. No such fine, finished work is done by other tribes in the area. The pots are baked by placing them on a rectangle of boards, two or more meters square, around a hot fire. The woman in charge turns them [438] until they are done. These pots are carried by [439] the men as far as San Cristóbal, where they are redistributed, and to Nenton in Guatemala.

283 Another widespread craft is spinning and 286 weaving of fabrics for clothing. No village [438] in the Tzeltal area trades these products because production barely meets their family needs. The backstrap loom of pre-Hispanic origin is the chief tool.

[184] Pita articles—ropes, bags, and nets to gather the harvest or carry loads—are mainly produced in Oxchuc and Cancuc. 322 In Cancuc wooden combs are also manu- 184 factured.

342 *Houses and Furniture*

Houses, from 3 to 5 m. on a side, are predominantly square with thatched roofs. The walls are wattle-and-daub or plain tree trunks tied with vines. Floors are of [354] hardened earth. The houses only have one door and no windows, except in some vil-

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lages of the lowlands where the houses have small windows, which improve ventilation and illumination slightly. In places like Chanal, where there is abundant lumber, the sides of the houses are built with wooden boards set vertically. The largest and best-built houses are in Tenejapa center.

Generally, the hut is divided into two rooms: the front is parlor and kitchen, the rear is bedroom. In Bachajon the rear room serves as bedroom and kitchen, the front room for sewing and grinding and the reception of visitors. In Amatenango del Valle the front of the house is open and used as a porch for visits. Ceramic work is also performed here. In one room of the house a bin of wood or reeds stores corn. Sometimes, small structures which serve as granaries are built inside the hut.

Among the auxiliary structures outside is the temascal (*pus*) used for steam baths. Not every hut has a *pus* since one is enough to attend the needs of several neighboring families. The *pus* is a small room 1.5 m. high by 2 m. on each side, built of stones and clay. The roof is flat. Inside a hollow forms a hearth for heating stones. Water thrown on these red-hot stones produces the necessary steam. On the floor are boards on which people lie while taking the bath. Among the Tzeltal and Tzotzil the *pus* is not only for cleanliness but also for the cure of certain diseases and to strengthen women after childbirth. Sweat baths are more commonly taken in Tierra Fria than in Tierra Caliente.

The other structures near the hut are the chickencoop and the hogpen.

Furniture is limited to essential items. In the kitchen are the three hearth stones, the comal (*samet*), the grinding stone (*chá*), a bench or strong table to hold the metate (*ah-ken*), one or two small tables (*matz-malté* or *vebalté*) 25–39 cm. high and 30–40 cm. in diameter, and small benches 15–20 cm. high made of scooped-out tree trunks (*tzanté*). Kitchen equipment includes earthenware (pans, pitchers, and jars) and

[P. 207-B]

4: Villa Rojas E-4, 5 (1938-1944) 1969
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415 352 [513] [735] [415] containers made of jicara (*boch*) or tecomate (*tzu*). In the bedroom is a bed (*uaybal*) made of boards placed on four forked poles, usually with a sleeping mat on it. Only the very poor sleep on mats on the floor. Small chairs, wooden chests for clothes, baskets of all shapes and sizes, pita bags and nets, shelves made of wood ribs, and pegs for hanging clothes are scattered around the hut without order.

353 798 The most important article is the altar with the family cross. Its construction varies in different areas: it may be a plain small table made of tree trunks or better material. The altar is generally ornamented with pine needles. Occasionally, the figure of a saint is placed by the cross.

Clothing and Ornaments

291 184 Each community has its own style of clothing, which gives a sense of unity to its members and permits the observer to identify easily the groups during fiestas or market days. This variety applies only to a few items of clothing, which is basically the same for the entire region. 291 Men's costume consists of short pants (*uesh*) and a long shirt (*nátil-kú*) which reaches the knee, both made of cloth that women weave; a red sash or belt (*chuj-chut*) of cotton, 10–15 cm. wide by 1.5 m. long; a palm hat (*pishol*); and leather sandals (*shanabil*). Residents of cold areas wear a woolen chamarra which is manufactured by the Chamulas. Women's costume consists of a skirt made of wool (*tzek*) or blue thick cloth, made in one piece and wrapped around the body with two pleats in front; it is belted at the waist by a red wool sash, which the Chamulas manufacture. Occasionally, they 301 wear a wool rebozo. They tie their hair with a red woolen ribbon (*malal*) and wear earrings (*yulel-chikinil*) and glass necklaces 291 (*ual*) bought in the city. Women always go barefoot, even during long trips. When outdoors they cover their heads with a cloth or wool fabric.

[184] Each municipio has made of these clothes

[P.208-A]

291 a typical outfit with special characteristics.
184 For instance, the men of Tenejapa wear a hat of broad brim and pointed round crown, trimmed with thin ribbons of different colors. They also wear a dark chamarra or poncho with thin white stripes. The characteristic clothes of Cancuc are short, tight pants and a long shirt trimmed with red wool yarn. In Tierra Caliente the wool chamarra is not used nor is the variation in outfit so well defined.

Transportation

482 Men and pack animals are the principal
[484] carriers in the Tzeltal region, which is
[487] crossed in all directions by narrow trails.
[492] Men carrying loads of 40–50 kg. usually
482 walk, in one day, as far as 8 leguas
147 (leagues). According to Blom and LaFarge (1926–27, 2:386), the Tzeltal of the highlands are so strong "que ponen en vergüenza a una mula." In 1944 I observed Indians
[565] passing by my Yochib camp, carrying chairs on their shoulders, in which a lady or a child of upper-class Ladinos from Ocosingo
492 and Yajalon would be sitting. Pack animals are now becoming common among the Tzeltal, some of whom also have saddle horses.
491 Part of the Tzeltal-Tzotzil region is crossed by the Pan-American Highway joining Guatemala and Mexico City. In recent years, roads called "brechas de penetración" for motor vehicles are being constructed.
474 The natives of some communities (Oxchuc
493 and Chanal) have organized cooperatives and purchased their own trucks.

804 *Units of Measure*

The system of measures still retains aboriginal characteristics. The main units are:

Nab: Distance between the end of the thumb and the middle finger extended.

Chutub: Distance between the end of the thumb and the index finger extended. It is equivalent to the jeme. The Indians do not use the cuarta (distance between the thumb and little finger extended).

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804 *Shucubil* ("codo"): Distance from the elbow to the end of the middle finger extended.
Jaub ("braza" or "brazada"): Distance between the ends of both extended arms.
Yankabal (equivalent to the meter): Distance from the armpit to the extended middle finger of the opposite hand.

[484] The "legua" is also used and is equivalent to the distance a man can walk during one hour (approximately 5 km.).

Of square measures used for the milpa, the most common is the *tarea* (equivalent to a square of 8 jaubs). This is equivalent to a square of 16 m., which is very close to the mecate used by the Yucatec Maya.

The standard most often used for measuring maize or beans is the *almud*, which among the Tzeltal of Cancuc, Oxchuc, and Tenejapa, is equivalent to 4 *quartillas* (each quartilla is equivalent to 8 large *borcelanas*). The borcelana is an earthen cup or pot, which can be either small or large. The large one is equivalent to ½ kg. of maize, the small one to ¼ kg. of maize. The borcelana is used to measure chile.

[415]

Economics

241 *Division of Labor and Specialization*

462 Care of the milpa is men's work, but sometimes women help with light tasks such as weeding or harvesting. Seeding does not require great effort, but it is considered a job for men exclusively. Women may participate in chile seeding—but in the planting only; the holes in the ground can be made only by men, who use a *macana* or planting stick. Cutting and carrying firewood are tasks for men, but women may perform them when men cannot. Women can handle an axe or machete skillfully. Fetching water, from river or fountain, is work for women. It is considered inappropriate and ridiculous that a man carry a cantaro on the hip. Laundry and all kitchen duties are performed by women, as well as spinning, knitting, sewing, embroidering, and making of earthenware. Manufacture

462

[P 209-A]

[Text continues on p. 210-B]

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FIG. 3—INDIAN GIRL, FINCA EL REAL.
(Copyright, Gertrude Duby.)

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4 Villa Rojas E-4,5 (1938-1944) 1969 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

Aguacatenango

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Fig. 4—WOMEN FROM AGUACATENANGO. (Copyright, Gertrude Duby.)

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4: Villa Rojas E-4, 5 (1938-1944) 1969
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462 of palm articles (sleeping mats and hats) as well as articles of wood, stone, or leather are tasks for men; the same applies to basketry but women may occasionally help.

Government matters are under the exclusive supervision of men. In religious affairs women may participate but only in a very minor way—to say prayers or to take care of the saints in the church. The most important ceremonies—on hills, in caves, at waterholes, or in other mountain spots—are performed by men who specialize in the ritual.

[P. 210-B]

4: Villa Rojas E-4,5 (1938-1944) 1969
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462 All activities related to curing of disease are also performed by specialized men, though in some places women occasionally participate. Help at childbirth is always assigned to experienced female relatives; there [844] [959] are no professional midwives--nor profes- [584] sional marriage brokers.

Specialization is little developed. Only in 463 the largest centers are there a few individuals concentrated on carpentry, tailoring, trading, masonry, or some other activity. [241] The families in Tenango and Amatenango who carry on the ceramics industry also

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463 241 handle the milpa. It is rare to find an Indian who does not have a milpa since this is the work that ensures his existence.

Property Rights

423 613 [177] [181] This is a matter that varies according to the degree of acculturation reached by the community. In the most conservative groups (Oxchuc, Cancuc, Tenejapa, Tenango) there are still family property rights, but they seem to depend on lineage rather than on the immediate family (Villa Rojas, 562 428 1947, ch. 19). As these lineages are patrilineal, a woman does not count when inheritance is involved. She can own her parcel of land only when she has saved the money to buy it, but this is not frequent. Any man can claim lands that previously belonged to his lineage; it is enough to give back the money paid for them two or three generations ago. Of course, he has to prove by witnesses or documents that those lands were the property of his lineage.

127 423 613 614 According to a document dated 1861, which I found in the possession of the Gómez Ichiloks (they belong to the Gómez clan and to the Ichilok lineage), residents of the paraje of Tzajalchen of the municipio of Oxchuc, this property system seems to be very ancient. The document is of special interest.

000 DOCUMENTO DE TIERRAS DE LOS GÓMEZ ICHILOK A A

Por pedimento de los ciudadanos Domingo Gómez Ichílok, Tomás Gomez Ichilok, otro Tomás Gomez Ichílok, Miguel Gómez Ichílok, Diego Gómez Ichílok, otre, Domingo Gómez Ichílok, otro Diego Gómez Ichílok y su hijo Diego Gómez Ichilok y por último su hijo menor Manuel Gómez Ichílok, y como antiguamente se acostumbra en este pueblo que segun los hermanos de una propria familia, se les demarca un retazo de terreno de ejido para que en lo sucesivo no haya pleitos con los vecinos como suele suceder, nosotros los Gobernadores, Auxíliares, Justicias, Escribanos y Testigos, pasamos al paraje denominado Tzajalchén a

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A A /For a translation by H.R.A.F. of this document, see category 116, p. 225-C--Analyst/

000 ponerles sus mojones y a darles al posesión que les corresponde segun el número de ellos.

"Donde principió par[illegible] primer mojón *Busulton Pacton* que está en el camino derecho; 2° mojón *Oxloton* que está en el camino; 3er. mojón *Tzovilton*; 4° mojón *Tequelton*, mojón con Pedro Moreno; 5° mojón *Yolnelej Lomchen*; 6° mojón de acuerdo con Juan Gómez Bet y Martin Sanchez Chelap se llama la raya *Teguel Canté* que es también la raya con Manuel Chinbak; 7° mojón *Tequelton* raya única con Marcos Hernandez López y Diego López y Diego Giron Vázquez; 8° mojón y último *Basulton Pacton*.

"Habiendo quedado todos los vecinos colindantes contentos, ofreciendo ambos que en lo sucesive no tendrán el menor disgusto, pues, son nativos de su propio pueblo, bajo el concepto que si alguno delinquiese en trastornar el orden en que han quedado, el agraviado lo pondrá en conocimiento del Juez para aberiguarlo y aplicarle la pena que merezca, para acuya seguridad son testigos Lorenzo Ichilok, Martin Solel, Miguel Gómez Ichilok y Gobernadores Diego Méndez Chizna y Nicolas Jiménez Acux. Por los testigos y Gobernadores que no saben firmar. Abril 12 de 1861 y como testigo y escribano Alonso Santis.

423 613 614 The descendants of the Gómez Ichiloks still live in the same paraje of Tzajalchen and share the same parcel. In other lineages the original parcel was subdivided on agree-
[178] ment between the interested parties. In this way single individuals now own pieces of land, a type of property ownership that is becoming more general as the old social organization based on clans and lineages gradually breaks up.

423 427 The parcels can be rented to people of other lineages and of other communities. Often the Tzeltal of Oxchuc rent their parcels to natives from Tenejapa or Cancuc
[613] [614] who are their immediate neighbors. Payment, made with food, chicha, and money, must be shared by the most important members of the same clan other than the ones of the same lineage (Villa Rojas, 1947, ch. 19).

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423 592 [184] In the most acculturated communities (Aguacatenango and Amatenango) individually held property is more general. The head of the house is the owner of the parcel and he can manage it as he pleases. Referring to Aguacatenango, B. Metzger (1960, p. 11) states that:

> In general, land is "owned"—that is, controlled—by the household; as long as the son lives with the father, he may speak of "his land," but in fact he works the land with his father, planting what and when his father de-
> [428] cides. The son who lives apart is usually given a piece of land by his father, and he acquires new land which he, in turn, will pass on to his sons at his death or, if he chooses, before.

[613] [593] At this level the lineage concept has disappeared, and the only recognized connection is the father-son relationship.

423 Irrigated lands ("tierras irrigables"), however, in Aguacatenango and in Amatenango contain parcels belonging to private owners and parcels used in common, which are administered or given by the local authorities to be cultivated. Metzger (*ibid.*) informs us that: "Recently, land has been bought on the edges of the town by each of the two barrios for the exclusive use of their members, while in the irrigable area the holdings of members of the two barrios are separate and watered by separate canals."

[175] Ejido lands exist in almost all the region, distributed according to the Programa Agrario de la Revolución Mexicana since 1914 but in some communities not put into practice until after 1930. These lands are administered by the "comite ejidal" of each municipio, which gives to any individual who needs land the permission to cultivate it. These lands cannot be sold or transferred in any way, because they are considered common property.

421 586 Family land as well as the house and its equipment belong to the man. When a marriage is dissolved, the woman goes back to her parents without taking anything but

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421 586 her own clothes and her backstrap loom. A widow may continue living in the hut and use its equipment only if she has a son. Otherwise, she must leave the house and return to her father's home because the land will be claimed by the brothers or other male relatives of the deceased husband.

Production and Consumption Groups

592 433 241 The family controls all matters related to production and consumption. The head of the house, with the help of his wife and other members of the family, takes care of farming and producing the basic food crops.

462 476 241 In the most conservative communities, the old custom of planting by a cooperative group, composed of relatives and friends, is still practiced. This is a task for men exclusively, since much skill and strength are required to dig up the ground in carefully spaced, perfectly straight rows. The owner [785] [834] of the milpa has to fast and observe sexual abstinence before starting the planting.

462 592 Only the family shares in the rest of the labor, according to their sex: men take care of tasks requiring much effort, women perform those such as tending domestic animals. Help from relatives and neighbors [476] may also be asked occasionally, to build up fences around the orchard, to open or improve irrigation systems, etc.

Trade and Markets

438 Tenango and Amatenango concentrate on producing ceramics and trading them to neighboring municipios. Other municipios have a very limited commercial activity: Tenejapa exports a few sleeping mats; Oxchuc, ropes, nets, and pita bags; Cancuc, wooden combs, Bachajon, clay toys. These Tzeltal villages have no specialized merchants as do Zinacantan and Chamula.

443 There are a few markets where a large number of people meet regularly: Teopisca, in the south, has a Sunday market where natives from Aguacatenango, Amatenango, and Pinola meet. In the central part of the region they meet every Sunday at the mar-

4: Villa Rojas E-4, 5 (1938-1944) 1969
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443 ket of Tenejapa. Other commercial centers are Ocosingo, Chilon, and Yajalon in the north. These markets are also frequented by Ladinos, but others, located far from the cabecera, are exclusively for Indians. The most important of them is the Saturday market of Yochib near Tenejapa, Cancuc, and Oxchuc. It draws 300–400 natives, who arrive at dawn carrying agricultural and handcraft products. Most people come from 8 to 10 in the morning, after which they begin to depart; about 2 or 3 P.M. only those staying to drink chicha are left. Transactions [439] are paid in trade or in money.

Wage Work

464 Because the cold climate and the rugged topography of the region produce little corn, the natives must work periodically as day laborers on the coffee plantations of the Soconusco area on the Pacific coast. About 7000 Tzeltal and a few more Tzotzil work there each year. Natives may go to the coffee plantations any time of the year but prefer to do so during the months the milpa requires less attention (either after planting or after harvest). Between Yajalon and Ocosingo are plantations where men from the neighboring villages are hired for short periods.

Use of Wealth

556 578 829 183 Because of their social organization, it is very difficult for these Indians to accumulate wealth. The worst sin an individual can commit against the community is to store up crops, domestic animals, or clothes, or simply to build a better house. Whatever [754] raises an individual above his fellows—buying a new house, improving an old one, buying a horse—can cause in them a deep fear of being the target of witchcraft (Villa Rojas, 1947).

556 829 183 Those who, enjoying good health, are able to pile up some wealth, are obliged by the community to spend it in banquets and amusements for the community. It is believed that the old men and principales

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556 829 183 know, with the aid of the *nagüales* (supernatural spirits), about the wealth each member of the group has; those who have more than necessary must pay for the expenses of fiestas, etc.

Social Organization

Kinship

614 613 The basic elements of the clan system of the ancient Mayá can still be found in the most conservative groups. At the present time, the kinship system is divided into patrilineal clans, which are divided into [183] patrilineages. In some cases, the name of the clan is of Spanish origin; the name of the lineage, of indigenous origin. In Oxchuc there are six clans whose names are: Gómez, Santis, López, Méndez, Encinos, and Rodríguez. The first two clans are the largest, since the Gómez clan has 37 lineages, the Santis 39. The last two are almost disappearing as they have only one or two lineages. Among the indigenous names for lineages are: Ichilok, Nimáil, Akux, Cojton, Chic, Molox, Nich, Antun, Chisná, Tib, and Mulesh. These designate names of animals, plants, or objects.

A man whose name is Juan Gómez Nich, for example, belongs to the Gómez clan and to the Nich lineage. Generally, the name of the lineage is enough to show to which clan somebody belongs: if his name is Juan Nich, it is immediately known that he is from the Gómez clan. This special characteristic of the indigenous name is designated by the word *Jol s'bij*, which means 'head of the name.'

[184] In Cancuc (a community next to Oxchuc) clans have special names, such as Chik, Chejeb, Ijká, and Boj. If the indigenous name is known, the clan name is self-evident. The Spanish name has lost its specific function, and, according to Guiteras Holmes (1947, pp. 4–5), there are Indians who do not even remember it. However, the Spanish surname designates exogamic units of a patrilineal type throughout the region; without

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[Text continues on p. 214-B]

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Tenejapa

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FIG. 5—TENEJAPA GROUP WITH VESSELS CONTAINING CHICHA. (Copyright, Gertrude Duby.)

[P 214-A]

4: Villa Rojas E-4, 5 (1938-1944) 1969
NV9 Tzeltal NV9

614 exception, both names (lineage and clan)
613 are inherited from the father.

[178] In the more acculturated communities the
[612] clan and lineage system tends to disappear and to be replaced by the bilateral system,
[582] characteristic of Ladino society. In Aguacatenango, despite the belief that there is a relationship between people of the same
613 Spanish name, they may marry. Moreover, they are starting to be ashamed of using the indigenous name differentiating the lineages. B. Metzger states (1959, p. 18):

[551] Lineage names appear to be used as surnames within the community—as we have discovered

[P 214 - B]

4: Villa Rojas E-4, 5. (1938-1944) 1969
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613 by overhearing them spoken in unguarded mo-
551 ments—but their existence is vigorously denied or only cautiously admitted to outsiders. As a result, we have not been able to discover how these names are distributed in the community, how wide the lineage is, and whether or not kinship terms are applied throughout.

613 In the more conservative municipios the
[614] clans are not centralized but dispersed throughout the parajes. Lineages are now fragmented, and the common ancestor is no longer remembered. Generally these lineages are localized in one or two parajes, but neither can remember its genealogy further

[P. 214-C]

613 than three or four generations. In the past, these lineages were localized, and in places like Bachajon, Cancuc, and Oxchuc the exact locations are still remembered.

613 769 778 A few generations ago, the most distinguished members of each lineage were buried in the cave after which the paraje was named, the bones and ashes of the dead being placed in large jugs or urns. The caves were places for ceremonies honoring the ancestors. Blom (1954) made a study of these burials and mapped the distribution of the sites. These caves are still places for worship but not for burials; the cross protecting all members of the lineage is kept there, as well as, in some instances, small crosses belonging to the important members of it (Villa Rojas, 1946, p. 16).

614 The words *chapomal* and *tijinabal* name the members of the clan in general. It is said that "the neighbors of this paraje are all chapomales," or "those cannot get married because they are chapomales." Tijinabal also means neighbor or member of the same paraje. Another word, *patshunk*, is also an equivalent of tijinabal. These words are currently used in Oxchuc, Cancuc, and Bachajon. On the other hand, there is no specific word to designate the lineage.

[835] The main function of the clan is to regulate marriage, as the union of two chapomales is considered incestuous. The clan [574] also gives much self-confidence to the Indian who travels to other parajes, for he can always find hospitality among people of his own clan. It also has a function of social control, exercised by the old men of the group, who punish all transgressors against the established rules. Helped by the nagual (supernatural spirit), they find out about the behavior of the members of the clan and punish according to the crime (Villa Rojas, 1947).

614 626 887

613 428 The lineage relationship is also important in inheritance (especially land), since the plots should always be under the control of individuals of the same Indian name. Only where such persons are absent or missing or

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613 [428] have no interest in the land is preference given to the chapomales of other lineages. The importance of the lineage is stressed again during events such as curing ceremonies, conflicts, weddings, burials, fiestas, or banquets, where members of the same lineage should be invited first, then the chapomales.

601 The Omaha type of terminology still predominates in the more conservative municipios, where the same names are used for children of the father's sister as well as for children of the ego's sister, while children of the mother's brother are considered to be uncles and aunts on the matrilineal side (Murdock, 1949, p. 102; Guiteras Holmes, 1947, pp. 13–15; J. Nash, 1959, pp. 4–7).

The name *kichan*, given to the mother's brother, is also given to all the patrilineal descendants, stressing the concept that they are regarded as persons from another clan.

The most common kin terms collected in Cancuc by Guiteras Holmes (1947, p. 8) and in Oxchuc by Siverts (1955, pp. 16–20) are practically the same.

Tzeltal	*English*
Bankil	older brother of a man
Xibel	older brother of a woman
uish	older sister; father's sister
Kitzin	youngest brother or sister
Ta'	father
Me	mother
Nichán	a man's children
Kaal	a woman's children
Ta-jun	father's brother
Mee-jun	mother's sister
Nicha-jun	the children of a man's brother
Kaal-jun	the children of a woman's sister
Kichán	mother's brother; children of a man's sister
Cha-mam	a man's grandchildren
Kil-al	a woman's grandchildren
Mam	grandfather
Meel-kuj	grandmother
Mamalal	husband
Kinam	wife
Bal	a man's brother-in-law
Jauan	a woman's sister-in-law
Mu	siblings-in-law of opposite sex

[P. 215-B]

[Text continues on p. 216-B]

4: Villa Rojas E-4,5 (1938-1944) 1969 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Oxchuc

592
594

TABLE 3—DOMESTIC COMPOSITION

	Number	Percentage
Nuclear Families:		
Man, wife, no children	4	8.2
Man, wife, children	19	38.8
Man, 2 wives, no children	1	2.0
Man, 2 wives, children	5	10.2
Widow, children	2	4.1
Man, wife, children not own	2	4.1
	33	67.4
592 Extended Families:		
596 Man, wife, married son and wife	6	12.2
Man, wife, married daughter	2	4.1
Widow, married son	6	12.2
Widow, married daughter	1	2.0
Man, wife, married son, and married grandson	1	2.0
	16	32.5

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4: Villa Rojas E-4.5 (1938-1944) 1969
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601

Nial	son-in-law
Kalib	daughter-in-law
Nial-mamal	a man's father-in-law
Kalib-mamal	a woman's father-in-law
Nial-meel	a man's mother-in-law
Kalib-meel	a woman's mother-in-law

601
576 The word *tatik* (from *tat*, 'father') is usually applied as a courtesy name to all married males, without distinction of clan or lineage. The same applies to *metik* (from *me*, 'mother'), a term applied to all married females. *Mamtik* (from *mam*, 'grandfather') is the name given to old and also to very respected people.

601
608 The ritual kinship terminology is:

Tzeltal	*English*
Kumpare	compadre (GodFa of ego's children)
Kumale	comadre (GodMo of ego's children)
Jalatat	godfather
Jalamé	godmother
Jala-al	a woman's godson
Jala-nichan	a man's godson

594 *Family Groups*

The nuclear family, formed by a couple and their children, is the basic pattern throughout the region.
[P 216-B]

4: Villa Rojas E-4, 5 (1938-1944) 1969
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000 throughout the region. There are also com-
596 pound families in which other members, married or widowed, from the same patrilineal nucleus, plus their children, share the same house or the same kitchen.

[129] Table 3, taken from J. Nash (1959, p. 2), was compiled from data gathered in Oxchuc parajes where we had our headquarters.

Of the 16 extended families, 13 are formed by married sons living in the parents' house, the married daughters living with their parents derive from the custom that the son-in-law spends a period of service in his father-in-law's house during the first months of marriage.

592 These types of family composition continue even in acculturated communities like Aguacatenango. According to B. Metzger (1959, p. 8), of the 174 homes that constitute this village, 121 are nuclear and 53 are extended families; of the latter, 15 are formed by parents living with their married sons and 10 are formed by widows living with an unmarried son. There are only two instances of parents who live in an unmarried daughter's house. Married brothers very seldom live in the same house.

000 Though the nuclear family predominates,
[P 216 - C]

Though the nuclear family predominates, custom dictates that the house be near members of the same lineage or patrilineal group, perhaps because of the patrilineal system of land inheritance. In the parajes groups of houses in which families composed of mother, father, uncles, and other members of the patriline live are common. No fences mark the limits of the property; their infrequent presence merely keeps the pigs and chickens under control. This group of houses, easily accessible and inhabited by people related by kinship, constitutes the most important influence in the individual's formation, since it is here that he acquires his first experiences and cultural values, as well as the emotional links that will have the greatest weight in his life. This system of patrilocal residence is observed all through the region, even in compact villages like Aguacatenango, where lack of space favors dispersion. B. Metzger (1959) tells us: "Looking at the nuclear families to trace patrilocality there, we find that in 74 cases where we have adequate data, 39 are in the same block and 12 in adjacent blocks with husband's parents or siblings; 11 in the same block and 8 in adjacent blocks with wife's parents or siblings; 4 are classed to neither spouse's family."

In villages or cabeceras of a compact type it is customary to mark family plots by a fence of stones or sticks, with entrance toward the street (Chanal, Sivaca, Amatenango, Aguacatenango). Occasionally, when the nuclear family is divided because of the marriage of one of the sons, then the "solar" or the "sitio" (as it is called in the region) is subdivided by another fence that separates the portion now belonging to the new family. A door allows easy communication between both families. Sometimes, even three nuclear families live in a large sitio, divided by fences.

Types of Marriage

Types of marriage vary from that following the old traditional to one requiring the

583 procedures (*trámites*) of church and civil registry. The traditional marriage is an ar-
584 rangement between two families. The young man's parents, with his agreement, select the bride and start the visits leading to the
[574] petition. The visits to the girl's house must
[203] be made at dawn, accompanied by two or three bottles of aguardiente. These visits continue for several months, because the girl's parents want to consult the old men or the most important members of the patrilineal clan.

585 The wedding itself is simple, a family ritual concerning the boy's parents, the girl's parents, and old men of the clan she belongs to. Now the boy appears for the first time, bringing articles that will "warm up" the fiesta (Villa Rojas, 1949):

1 garrafón (about 18 liters) of aguardiente
80 cooked eggs
80 tortillas
80 tamales of the *chenkul-uaj type* (corn and bean dough)
10 kilos of pozole with chile
10 kilos of pozole without chile
1 kilo of ground chile
1 almud (4 kilos) of beans

According to my informants from Oxchuc, these items represent what the girl's parents have spent for her during childhood.
[574] This marriage feast is called *beybal-ja* ('the first delivery of aguardiente').

585 These items are presented with the great-
614 est formality to the girl's clan in oral forms that symbolize the wish for everlasting friendship between both families. The oldest member of the girl's clan responds by expressing on behalf of all members their satisfaction in receiving those articles and their good wishes for a successful union. Immediately, the couple kneels on a petate and listens to the oldest member of the clan, who formally announces they are married and recites the duties and obligations of each.

584 Until recently in Cancuc the custom ob-
184 tained of making these marriage arrange-
[P 217-B]

584 [184] ments through a special person (*chunel*) for each of the four clans, and differed from Oxchuc, where the case is presented to the nearest old man of the clan. In Cancuc, according to Guiteras Holmes (1947, p. 3):

> The boy's parents dealt with the *Chunel* of the girl's clan when petitioning her. He received the gifts and gave approval; and then accompanied by the boy and his parents he went into the house of the girl's parents. There, he presented the boy's petition. Nobody could oppose the Chunel's decisions. The girl would die if she didn't obey the decisions of the elder of the clan.

583 Once a marriage feast is finished, the boy stays in his parents-in-law's house to fulfill the bride price (*stojyinam*). This service, which consists in helping the father-in-law in the milpa and in other duties, usually lasts a year, or less if arrangements are made in advance. Frequently during this period the man spends alternate periods of three weeks with his parents-in-law and with his own parents. When he has the means to do it, he builds his own house and starts the new cycle of a nuclear family.

581 585 574 [273] [614] After the first year of marriage, if the couple get along together, the man must make a present of two garrafones of aguardiente and the same petitionary items of food, though in larger amounts. This time, more of the girl's clan are present, and so increase the importance of the event. The purpose is to celebrate the success of the couple and the union that will exist between the two families. This big *tertulia*, along with the corresponding meal, is called [888] *mukel-ja* ('abundance of drink'). Old men of [273] the clan who cannot attend receive at their homes the portion of aguardiente they 586 should have drunk. On the other hand, if the couple could not get along during the first year and the union is annulled because of the woman's fault, her parents must give back all they have received during the first ritual.

581 574 Finally, to bring all these duties to an [P 218-A]

581 574 end, the husband gives a big meal sometime (even 30 years later) which must be attended by the important members of the wife's clan. Many illnesses in a family are attributed to the fact that the man did not fulfill this third requirement of a food gift (*oshe-vuelto-uaj-matz*, 'third delivery of food'). [1153]

584 Another custom, known as *yajk makte achish* ('cover or secure the girl'), is practiced when the chosen girl is too young (10–12 years) to get married. To secure her in the future, the boy's parents make arrangements with those of the girl, offering them liquor that other members of the girl's clan also share. When she grows older, they proceed with the wedding arrangements and the customary formal ceremonies.

583 Another form of marriage, existing among very traditional groups, begins with the capture of the girl. This happens when she has no father or important man representing the house. The boy and his parents must obtain cooperation from one of the male members of the girl's clan. With this accomplice the men go to the girl's house at midnight, take her, and bring her to the boy's parents either by persuading her mother with liquor or by force. Days later, they try to calm the anger of the important people of her clan, bringing further bottles of liquor. Usually the union becomes formally recognized after this, and the couple settle in their own home with the neighbors' approval. It is thus a sort of institutionalized capture.

581 177 585 Among the less conservative communities, these forms of marriage are being replaced by Ladino forms, which regard marriage not as a contract between two lineages or families but as an agreement between two individuals. Furthermore, the Catholic ceremony is considered very important. Premarital sexual relations and elopement are frequent. Metzger states that, "in Aguacatenango, to a considerable extent, the marriage choice is made by the boy and the girl after sexual experimentation and a period of 'going steady.' The boy tells his family about it and they proceed to make the arrangements

583 836 584 [836]

[P 218-B]

584 with the family of the girl. If the boy is accepted, the gifts are received and the marriage takes place.

585 184 [197] In Aguacatenango and Amatenango, the Catholic ceremony is sometimes delayed for several years after the informal marriage, because of the belief that the latter really consolidated the union. On the other hand, in places where the Ladino population is larger (Pinola and San Bartolo) the religious ceremony is considered by the Indians as a very important part of the customs.

184 177 608 The compadrazgo relationship is stressed among these communities where Ladinos have great influence. There are baptism, confirmation, and wedding padrinos. The rights and duties established through this relationship are still respected, especially 608 the compadre relationship. It is the duty of the child's parents to give occasional gifts [736] to the godparents. If the child's parents die, the godparents must take care of him, except when there are closer relatives to the father.

585 608 It is the main duty of the wedding godparents to help the couple maintain a good understanding and to dissolve, by advice, any disagreement. They always receive great respect and affection from their *ahijados*.

608 [851] Among conservative groups, the compadrazgo relationship arises only from the baptism of a child. Sometimes this relationship is established in a very informal way; perhaps during fiesta at the ceremonial center they may take advantage of the priest's presence to ask a very close friend to "embrace" the child. The padrino is then invited 574 608 to have aguardiente. At other times the arrangement is made formally; the parents of the child go to the house of their future [431] compadres to ask them that favor. Exchanges of gifts and dinner invitations are frequent, the child's parents feeling the greater obligation. These meals can be really banquets where many "platillos" and much aguardiente are consumed. Among 184 608 some groups, padrinos neither give a gift to 431 736

[P 219-A]

4: Villa Rojas E-4, 5 (1938-1944) 1969
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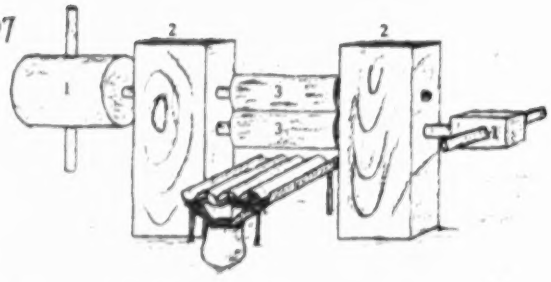

FIG. 6—SUGARCANE PRESS.
1, Kabal-té. 2, Smete-al. 3, S-kab.

184
608 their godchild nor protect him if he be-
736 comes orphaned, but this is only because
431 closer members of the same lineage take
608 care of him. But the padrinos must attend
764 the wake (*kanka-almail*) and the burial
when the godchild dies, as is expected from
the godchild when the godparents die. In
608 these communities, compadrazgo consti-
182 tutes both an important religious obligation
and a means of establishing friendship and
cooperation between families.

POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION

621 The political and religious patern is the
631 same throughout all the Tzeltal communi-
[184] ties, governed by two groups of authorities
whose activities are interrelated. The first
group, formed by members of the cabildo
and ayuntamiento, manages political affairs
of the community. The ayuntamiento main-
tains relationship between the local gov-
631 ernment and the national authorities. The
presidente municipal and the intermediate
authorities are popularly elected and then
confirmed by the congress of the state.
[563] These authorities must represent both eth-
nic groups (Indians and Ladinos) to war-
rant the claim that "justice is equal for
everybody." In 1936 the state government
ruled that in all municipios where the in-
digenous population predominates, the pre-
sidente municipal should be an Indian.

Next in authority after the presidente is

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631 the secretario, who is, without exception, a Ladino, for his responsibilities require a good knowledge of the Spanish language as well as office skills, which the Indians usually lack. Actually it is this official who controls all the administrative affairs of the municipio. He imposes fines, collects taxes, assigns communal work, and keeps in con-
[62] tact with the state authorities. After him rank the regidor, síndico, alcalde, police commander, and policemen.

621 Besides these authorities, which are the officially recognized ones, the Indians have their own government system, which in most places is still operating. Oxchuc is
[888] typical of the regional pattern. There the
[887] municipio is divided into two calpules, each of which is a kind of fraternity under the supervision of those old men having the
[776] greatest knowledge and prestige. Each cal-
[796] pul has also its own patron saint, venerated with special feasts and ceremonies throughout the year. (In Oxchuc the calpules are not geographically determined, and its members are spread in different parajes of
62 the territory.) Authority is now integrated in the following officials:

1 katinab, supreme chief of the whole calpul
1 okil kabil, "feet and hands" of the preceding, i.e., secretary
2 dzunubiles, supreme "pulsers" or "curers"
1 alcalde, who carries a staff of office
2 cornales (or governors), who also carry staffs of office
2 síndicos, who also carry staffs of office
4 x-tules (or regidores)

555 The four last jobs are reached by strict
624 hierarchy and indicate the progress of each
794 individual in the fulfillment of his social duties. This social-service career begins when the man is not yet married, when he is assigned the cargo of mayordomo of the church, which means that he has to attend to minor affairs connected with the church and to keep it clean. Shortly after his marriage he usually reaches the position of capitán, where he is responsible for the fies-

[P. 220-A]

555 624 794 ta for minor saints. He alternates between a period of activity and expense and one of quiet and economic recovery. The cargos alternate between church positions and civil government positions, but in communities where Indian tradition is stressed, there is no clear-cut division between civil and religious matters, because of the influence of the sacred and supernatural in daily life.

554 624 293 Those functionaries who have a staff of office wield great influence in their calpul. This cane (*nabté*), a sign of important status, is made of pine or other fine wood, and has a silver handle adorned with colored ribbons, primarily yellow, green, and red. The staff is ornamented by the owner and is considered a family object, usually placed on the home altar. Occasionally it is the [778] [782] object of prayers and offerings of incense. People carrying it are called *bastonudos*.

624 627 It is the duty of the staff-carriers to communicate to every paraje the orders of the ayuntamiento and those coming from the supreme chief of the calpul; to summon people for communal duties; to apprehend prisoners in cases of crime, and to deal with public problems such as taxation and epidemics. Coping with transgressions such as minor stealing, adultery, disputes, and intrigues are also their responsibility within the paraje, following the traditional form of procuring mutual understanding on both sides, in a calm atmosphere, around a bottle [692] of liquor. If conflict persists, those involved appear before chiefs of the calpul, who are called principales or "cabildos de justicia" even after they have finished their term of office.

794 The cargos from dzunubil on up are sacred and are open only to people with superior knowledge, recognized moral status, and expert experience in church ritual and in the semi-pagan ceremonies practiced in the caves, waterholes, and special mountains. These cargos are thus obtained not by automatic advancement but by special merits which are usually not acquired until advanced age. All such high representatives of

[P. 220-B]

794 the calpul must have a powerful nagual, through which they can learn about the private lives of their subordinates. This is usually the way they know who has enough money to pay for a feast, who can occupy special jobs, and which sinners deserve punishment.

Religious Life

The Catholic Cult

177 797 795 795 778 [346] [361] [776] [796] [794] The beliefs and religious practices introduced by Catholic missionaries in the 16th century have been adapted to the aboriginal culture. The largest and most important building of the village is the church, situated on the east side of the ceremonial center. In it are the image of the patron saint of the group, the holy cross, and lesser saints. The most profound ceremonies take place before the altar of these saints, who are looked upon as mediators between God and men, and are performed by the cabildos de misa, dzunubiles, and other elderly men of high rank who know both Catholic and Indian ritual.

346 796 795 [782] During the ceremonies the altar is decorated with flowers and with paper and ribbons of different colors. The floor is covered with pine needles, which give off an agreeable fragrance. Candles and copal are part of every prayer and ceremony, the copal having been used since pre-Hispanic times.

795 782 Common prayers of people who visit the center also have a place. These people have to enter the church and make an offering of candles to the patron saint. The prayers follow a formal pattern but vary in content according to the need and mood of the suppliant. Each individual talks intimately to the saint, specifying the help he needs, much as he would to a relative or a friend in whom he has absolute confidence. The two most frequent matters of petition are health and food; as the latter depends almost entirely on the condition of the cornfield, people pray that "it may not be damaged by the wind, or by cold, sun, birds, or plagues."

[P 221-A]

795 782 [778] In most of the prayers, Dios Tatik Jesucristo and the 13 *fiadores* who are in heaven are mentioned. These 13 fiadores are God's immediate helpers and correspond to the Christian saints. The cross is venerated as a representation of God wherever a prayer is said and so appears on the family altar, on mountaintops, in caves, at fountains, at entrances to the town, at the four corners of the plaza, and in front of the church.

795 778 776 177 The local character of Catholicism is seen in the Masses offered to the mountain called Ikal Ajau, near the ceremonial center of Oxchuc. The Indians say that it is a "living mountain" and give it great reverence, for Ikal Ajau was the name of the idol venerated by Oxchuc people in pre-Hispanic times. In almost all the municipios the saints are dressed as Indians. Towns with a large Ladino population have different saints for the Ladinos, who are dressed as Ladinos and to whom the Indians are completely indifferent, even to forgetting the names of them.

795 184 776

Fiesta for the Patron Saint

796 794 [435] One of the major events in the religious life of the Indians is the annual fiesta in honor of the patron saint and the other saints kept in the church. The capitán principal and some of his immediate assistants are in charge of the organization and expenses of these fiestas. The length and cost of the fiesta correspond to the importance of the saint and range from one day and 100 pesos to four days and several thousand pesos, like the one for the patron saint. To become a capitán principal a man must go through all the ranks and be able to afford the expenses of any fiesta, from a small one to the very large ones of the patrons.

796 The fiesta of the patron of each village is similar to that for any other saint but larger. There are Masses and other religious observances in the church, processions with the image of the saint along the main streets, large meals at the house of the cargoholders, and, above all, constant drink-

[P. 221-B]

[Text continues on p. 222-B]

4 Villa Rojas • E-4,5 (1938-1944) 1969 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

Amatenango del Valle

794
534
291
292

FIG. 7—CARGO OFFICIALS, AMATENANGO DEL VALLE. Note ceremonial hats and drum with which church functions are announced. (Copyright, Gertrude Duby.)

[P. 222-A]

4: Villa Rojas E-4, 5 (1938-1944) 1969
NV9 Tzeltal NV9

796 ing in and out of church. From the second day on, everybody is drunk, including women and young people. The sound of skyrockets is heard continuously and marks the gaiety of the people.

An important part of the ceremony at the church is to clean carefully the face of the saint and to change his clothes for new or at least clean ones so that he can be happy during his fiesta. Another act is to take his [788] image from the main altar to carry it in procession. This is important because there is 796 danger that the patron of other villages may 796 come to steal his power and he would then lose influence over the crops: the saint of Oxchuc helps the growth of corn, the one of Cancuc protects the cotton, and so on. To avoid this danger a substitute image is put in his place while the real one is taken out.

[P 222- B]

4: Villa Rojas E-4, 5 (1938-1944) 1969
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796 796 This substitute is called *gelol*, the same image but smaller, which is kept next the original one.

[788] [782] [533] During the procession the saint is carried in a litter. Incense is burned before him, while music with drums and flutes is played.

Traditional Ceremonies

796 [777] [778] There are other ceremonies held in the parajes which, although based on Christian ritual (including some of the prayers, presence of the cross, candles, etc.), still manifest ancient aboriginal traditions. Among

[776] these ceremonies is the one made before the house altar to Chulmetic (the earth goddess), to God, to Tatik Jesucristo and the 13 Fiadores del Cielo, for the soul of one newborn, to guard against sicknesses or bad influences of any kind. This ceremony is

[P. 222-C]

4: Villa Rojas E-4, 5 (1938-1944) 1969
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796 "sembrar el alma del niño" and must be performed by the dzunubiles and the cabildos
[776] de misa. A similar devotion is made to Uch, the supernatural being connected with the growth of the cornfield mentioned earlier.

782 Also important are the prayers said by
778 families before the cross of the ancestors, in the sacred caves.

Finally, certain prayers and offerings are made to particular lakes considered sacred because they are inhabited by virgins who look after the well-being of the people. The best known of these lakes is Banabil in Tenejapa. Some day during the year, a small box containing a woman's dress and all its ornaments is thrown into the water. The dress must be made by a virgin or an old woman.

787 *Talking Saints*

776 Another religious form where Indian tra-
[177] dition is manifested through Christian formulae is the veneration of the talking saints, a widespread cult among the Tzeltal and Tzotzil. These saints are always private property and are usually kept in a small case on the house altar. The believers go to the house of those who own a talking saint and ask him about any secret problem that might require a special knowledge to be solved. Although any saint can be asked, the most popular one is San Miguelito. In order to consult him, people have to tell his owner their problems. The owner, who supposedly is the only one who can understand his saint, talks to him behind a curtain so that no one can see him. Often the owner of a talking saint succeeds in creating a cult out of the saint's box, making a special altar for him and asking the believers for frequent offerings and prayers. Sometimes there is no box, so the effigy is placed on an altar and concealed by a curtain when the private dialogue takes place.

There have been cases, however, in which the talking saints exceed their function as oracles and advise people on political matters. This is why some talking saints have

[P. 223-A]

787 776 been taken away by the local authorities and sent to the Indians' Affairs Office in San Cristobal.

Life Cycle

Pregnancy and Childbirth

842 183 The strongest desire of every Tzeltal couple is to create a numerous family, preferably boys. The relationship between sexual intercourse and pregnancy is well understood among the Indians. They know that pregnancy lasts nine months and they keep a good count of it. On the other hand, there are ideas about the possibility of the woman being influenced by old men or "the owners of the nagual," who can interrupt pregnancy and change the fetus from one woman to another. This is why a woman who thinks she is pregnant for three or four months suddenly realizes that she carries nothing any more, while another one, maybe her neighbor, finds herself in advanced pregnancy, giving birth a few months later. It is to be stressed, however, that these changes can take place only among married women.

843 [833] 843 789

844 [81] In conservative villages (Tenejapa, Oxchuc, Cancuc) there is no professional midwife. Children are delivered by the oldest women in the neighborhood.

[757] [237] When labor begins, the first thing is to give the mother a beverage made of powdered opossum tail dissolved in boiling water. It is very common for Indians to have a dry tail hanging next the fireplace. The woman kneels at labor, facing the midwife. The husband's belt or the woman's rebozo is tied very tightly around the upper part of the abdomen to prevent the child from "going up again." The mother can also help herself by seizing a rope tied to the roof, or taking firm hold of any post of the house. The umbilical cord is chopped with a machete or cut with scissors, supported on an ear of corn. This ear is afterwards used as seed and is considered very fertile.

[241] [824]

[757] When labor has finished, the mother is given another hot beverage of pepper,

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844 cloves, and corncake, to keep her "warm
[757] and fertile." The placenta can be burned,
[842] thrown to the dogs, or deeply buried in case
the mother does not want another preg-
[789] nancy soon. The umbilical cord is put under
a three-stone fireplace if the baby is a girl,
on top of a tree if it is a boy so that he may
become brave and agile when adult.

846 A few hours after childbirth, at the latest
515 the next day, both mother and child take a
temascal (steam bath). Some women stay
in the temascal until they feel completely
recovered.

Childhood and Adolescence

789 During the first weeks of life, children are
774 in danger of losing their souls because their
inexperience makes them an easy prey to
the naguales and bad spirits who wander
around. As protection, mothers place a small
[237] piece of beeswax at the back of the child's
head or tie, as a bracelet, a red or blue
thread around the wrist. If none of these
precautions are taken, the mother has to
cover with branches the paths her child
walks, so that his soul can easily find its way
in case he loses it.

789 Because of all these dangers, fathers al-
852 ways try to perform the ceremony of "seed
774 the soul of the child" as soon as possible. It
[553] is during this ceremony that the child is
given a name, later confirmed according to
Catholic ritual at the ceremonial center. A
[608] very important aspect of the ceremony is
selection of the godparents.

753 *Sickness and Death*
776
[888] Most sicknesses come from infection or
malnutrition. To the natives, however, ill-
nesses have a supernatural cause and are
ascribed either to the anger of gods and
spirits or to old people who have a nagual
or who can throw a spell. The most frequent
explanation is that naguales or supernatural
beings are acting against people. They can
adopt human or animal form or appear as

[P 224-A]

753 776 [794] [888] [613] thunder, wind, or lightning. All the men who occupy or have occupied cargos in the political or religious organization are supposed to have a nagual, as do the older members of the lineage. They consider it their duty to punish those members of the group who have sinned and use their nagual, who can devour the soul of the victim little by little.

774 776 According to this idea, everybody has two souls: one which can be eaten by the naguales, and one which follows the destiny that its patron saint has planned for it. 761 775 776 When death comes, the naguales take away the first soul and have a banquet up in the mountains. In this feast, the naguales of the old people of the clan participate, joined by others induced to comradeship.

761 773 776 It is a widespread belief that at midyear the naguales go to a place in heaven called Atimaltik, where an old man who possesses the Book of Life lives. Since in this book he keeps account of the time each person can live, it is a source of information for the naguales, who thus can know who is close to death. When the signature of a person disappears from the book, this means that the person died.

764 People have to keep watch over the body for two days and two nights. It is placed on a wooden plank in the middle of the house after being washed or just given a change of clothes. Two candles are placed at the head. At night friends and neighbors come to keep company with the family. They play harp and guitar and drink chicha and aguardiente. At dawn, the men go home and the women remain crying near the corpse.

[613] [184] Following the ancient custom, the dead are buried near the graves of other men of the same lineage. In Cancuc, however, dead are buried inside the house.

The bottom and sides of the grave are covered with slabs to form a coffin. The corpse, bundled up in a petate, is placed inside. His clothes and other articles he may

[P. 224-B]

764 need in the afterlife are placed with him: a comb, a bowl, a bottle with water to dissolve the posol, a needle and thread, and, if a man, aguardiente.

The arms of the dead are crossed over the chest and a rosary (*uenteshil*) is put be-

[text continues top of p. 225-B]

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[References continue on middle of p. 225-B]

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764 tween his hands. The head is always placed to the west. During the following days, prayers are said to the memory of the dead. [768] [775] Sometimes the house is evacuated because people are afraid of the soul who remains saying goodbye to friends and relatives.

113 Nash, J., 1959
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Trens, 1942
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Vogt, 1964e

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614

/Document of Lands of the Gómez Ichilok

On account of the petition of the citizens Domingo Gómez Ichilok, Tomás Gómez Ichilok, another Tomás Gómez Ichilok, Miguel Gómez Ichilok, Diego Gómez Ichilok, another Domingo Gómez Ichilok, another Diego Gómez Ichilok and his son Diego Gómez Ichilok, and lastly his minor son, Manuel Gómez Ichilok, and as formerly was the custom in this town that, according to the brothers of one family, a piece of common land is marked off for them so that in the future there will be no disputes with the neighbors as is usually the case, we the Governors, Auxiliaries, Justices, Scribes and Witnesses, give the paraje /place/ called Tzajalchén for them to put their landmarks on and to give them the possession that corresponds to them according to their number.

"Where began to stand the first landmark Busulton Pacton which is on the road to the right; 2nd landmark Oxloton which is on the road; 3rd landmark Tzovilton; 4th landmark Tequelton, landmark with Pedro Moreno; 5th landmark Yolilnelej Lomchen; 6th landmark in accord with Juan Gómez Bet and Martin Sanchez Chelap is called the line Teguel Cante which is also the line with Manuel Chinbak; 7th landmark Tequelton only line with Marcos Hernandez López and Diego Lopez and Diego Giron Vásquez; 8th and last landmark Basulton Pacton.

"Having left all the bordering neighbors content, offering both that in the future they will not have the least disagreement, as they are natives of their own town, under the judgment that if anyone is guilty in upsetting the order in which it has been left, the injured party will put in the cognizance of the Judge to investigate it and to apply the punishment that it deserves, for whose security the witnesses are Lorenzo Ichilok, Martin Solel, Miguel Gómez Ichilok and Governors Diego Méndez Chizna and Nicolas Jiménez Acux. For the witnesses and Governors who do not know how to sign their names. April 12 of 1861 and as witness and scribe Alonso Santis./

[P.225-C]

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ah-ken -- a bench to hold the metate
asron -- hoe
avutel -- digging stick
bastonudos -- those officials who carry the staff of office
batzil-booch -- large serving dishes or bowls
beybal-ja -- the marriage feast
brazada -- a unit of measure equivalent to the distance between the arms when extended
canoja -- a special container, made from a fluted tree trunk, for making chicha
cha -- a metate or grinding stone
chenkuluaj -- tamales
chuj-chut -- a red sash or belt of cotton
chunel -- a go-between in arranging a marriage
chojak -- net bags
eché -- an axe
jaubtic -- a measuring rod corresponding to the brazada in length
jícaras -- small individual bowls
jilote -- first fruits of the harvest
luk -- a coa, or curved machete with a long handle
machit -- a machete

malal -- a red woolen ribbon worn in the hair
matzmalté (or vebalté) -- small tables
morral -- a sack hung from the shoulder containing seed
mucul pulato -- large pots
mukel-ja -- the meal and feast following the first year of a successful marriage
nabté -- the staff of office
nátil-kŭ -- a long shirt worn by men
olote -- corn cobs
oshe-vuelto-uaj-matz -- a meal given long after a marriage, by a husband to his wife's clan
pishol -- a palm hat
pus -- a temascal or structure used for steam baths
selab -- the cutting of grass from a plot where milpa had been the previous year
shanabil -- leather sandals
sok-uej -- cutting of bush grown for three or four years
stojyinam -- bride price
tarea -- a unit of measure equivalent to 8 brazada's square or 256 Sq. M.
temascal -- a structure used for steam baths
tzante -- small benches made of scooped-out tree trunks

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tzek -- a wool skirt worn by women
ual -- glass necklaces
ue-el olical -- lunch
ue-el sab -- breakfast
ue-el xmalcal -- supper
uesh -- short pants worn by men
yajk makte achish -- a custom of gift exchange, used by a boy's family to secure a wife for a son at some future time
yulel-chikinil -- earrings